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WASHINGTON STATE GIRLS GROUP EVALUATION



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Executive Summary

This study examined the effectiveness of psycho-educational and support group for girls on probation in Washington State. It was supported through the Washington State Partnership Council on Juvenile Justice and commissioned by the Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington State.

Method

The study involved both quantitative and qualitative analyses to explore the impact of girls groups on recidivism as well as explore the satisfaction and self-reported benefits of girls groups by group participants. Three sites were included in the quantitative analyses (curricula included Girls Circle and Girl Power). Outcomes were assessed by combining local, county data on group participation with state-level data on adjudication, treatment and risk assessment data from the Administrative Office of the Courts. Propensity score matching was used to balance any self-selection factors between the treatment and comparison groups, which were matched within county.

Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews with group facilitators which explored the need for gender-responsive programming, perceived benefits and accumulated wisdom about how to run productive group sessions. In addition, two focus groups were held with two different girls groups using the Girls Circle curriculum. The focus groups with the girls explored satisfaction with the groups, the types of information and knowledge girls were receiving and how this was applied to situations outside of the group.

Key Findings

- Girls Group participation acted as an engagement tool in that girls who participated in a girls group were more likely to subsequently complete an evidence-based program.
- Girls group participation in isolation, however, was associated with a slight increased risk of recidivism.
- There were no significant site differences in recidivism and no interaction between risk level and recidivism. Also, whether girls successfully completed a girls group as compared to non-completers was not related to recidivism.
- Girls reported high satisfaction levels with the groups and reported improvements in their romantic, friend and family relationships.

- Group facilitators reported that consistent attendance, a welcoming environment and adequately trained group facilitators were critical for encouraging positive, productive groups.

Recommendations

1. Provide support groups that do not address criminogenic needs only as engagement tools in conjunction or immediately prior to evidence-based treatment (e.g., ART, FIT, FFT, MST). Alternately, adapt or develop new programming that involves girls-only groups in a welcoming, gender-responsive setting that specifically addresses criminogenic needs (e.g., aggression, family conflict, meeting needs in prosocial ways). Adaptations or new programs should adhere to best practices strategies for fidelity and ongoing monitoring for effectiveness.
2. Refer girls scoring in the moderate or high range on the court risk assessment to groups provided through the juvenile justice system. Divert girls with high mental health need, scoring in the low risk range, to community services that address mental health needs and connect girls to supportive services.
3. For supportive, non-criminogenic girls groups that are provided through the juvenile justice system, develop and implement a fidelity and quality assurance monitoring tool (possibly based on the Aggression Replacement Training tools) and monitor fidelity through a state-level quality assurance specialist.
4. Given the impact of these groups on public health concerns, explore the possibility of cross-system collaborations for funding and implementing girls groups within the juvenile court for girls scoring in the moderate and high risk range.

Recommendations for group process

1. Provide a welcoming, safe environment by setting aside a special meeting place/room that is familiar and comfortable for the girls. Provide snacks.
2. Assist with transportation as necessary. Hold groups at times that are convenient for bus schedules.
3. Encourage consistency by developing a set of expectations regarding attendance with clear consequences for exceeding the number of allowable absences.
4. Ensure group facilitators have adequate training or experience in EBP topics and language as well as experience in running group sessions.
5. Use a structured format that includes a predictable, weekly routine and includes both psycho-educational as well as expressive (creative) activities.

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Washington State Girls Group Evaluation

Introduction

Since the early 1980's, the rate of girls in the juvenile justice system has grown nearly 80% (Puzzanchera, 2009). Girls now make up about one third of the juvenile justice population as compared to one fifth from the mid part of the last century (Poe-Yamagata & Butts, 1996). In addition, girls in the juvenile justice system have staggeringly high rates of mental health issues and previous traumatic experience. It is estimated that 70% of girls in the juvenile justice system have a diagnosable mental health disorder that causes significant impairment (Teplin, 2002; Cocozza & Shufelt, 2006), and close to half of girls in residential settings may have active PTSD symptoms (Cauffman, 1998). The rates of mental health symptoms, including trauma, are significantly higher for girls than boys in nearly all domains apart from substance use (Teplin, 2002). Further, girls are more likely to develop PTSD than boys as a result of assaultive violence, and thus assume a greater health risk when exposed to trauma (Breslau, Wilcox, Storr, Lucia & Anthony, 2004; Olff, Langeland, Draijer, & Gersons, 2007; Tolin & Foa, 2006).

In Washington State, justice-involved girls are more likely than boys to have home conflict, previous sexual abuse, a poor relationship with a father, and a history of running away (Walker, 2010). Turbulent relationships, abuse and poor family support become a pathway for justice involvement through family conflict (domestic violence charges), substance use and a persistent pattern of decreased prosocial functioning (truancy; school assault; misdemeanor crimes), as well as prostitution (Chesney-Lind & Okamoto, 2001; Fagan, Van Horn, Hawkins, & Arthur, 2007; Gorman-Smith & Loeber, 2005).

These factors have prompted policy, research and funding activities for girl-specific services that emphasize potential system bias as well as an understanding of the developmental differences between boys and girls. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, American Correctional Association and the American Bar Association and National Bar Association have all published policy statements indicating a need for justice services to address the unique needs of girls and women. This need is also recognized at an international level. In the United National Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice (Beijing Rules, 1985), Rule 26.4 states that "Young female offenders placed in an institution deserve special attention as to their personal needs and problems." Ultimately, however, a significant driver in area of gender-responsive treatment has been local policymaking as

administrators and coalitions have recognized the multifaceted needs of justice-involved girls in their own communities (Bloom, Owen, Deschenes & Rosenbaum, 2002).

Gender-responsive practice, which often refers to girl-specific practice, has been significantly influenced both by an awareness of the trauma histories of justice-involved girls as well as a theory of female development that emphasizes the central role relationships play in healthy functioning (Gilligan, 1982; Covington & Bloom, 2003). The research literature provides moderate support for a heightened desire for affiliation and acceptance among girls as compared to boys, along with a “care orientation” in which the impact of one’s actions upon others is a primary moral consideration (Jaffee & Hyde, 2000). The desire for acceptance is conceptualized as both a risk and strength for girls; as a risk, it increases vulnerability to stay in relationships that are coercive and/or abusive which can lead to poor psychological and physical health as well as justice-involvement (Pepler & Craig, 2004). As a strength, the value on relationship translates into strong protective effects when girls have prosocial friends (Leve & Chamberlain, 2005) as well as the capacity to develop nurturing relationships with others as a source of support.

Accordingly, service delivery models for girls in the juvenile justice system have increasingly emphasized girl-only treatment groups. Amongst promising programs on the OJJDP model programs guide, four of the six listed programs that focused specifically on girls were provided in a group format. The two other non-group programs explicitly addressed the importance of relationship building through 1) mentoring and 2) building positive relationship with probation officers. Limitations in funding and program sustainability have limited the rigor with which girl-specific programs have been evaluated in the past (OJJDP). Consequently, there are no girl-specific practices that are considered evidence-based at an exemplary level. OJJDP is currently funding a three year trial of girl programming which utilizes more sophisticated methods; this will undoubtedly shed more light on the link between gender-responsive programming and court outcomes. Below is a brief summary of some of the available research to date on promising girl-specific programs in juvenile justice settings:

Girls Inc. Friendly PEERsuasion.

Friendly PEERsuasion is a drug and drinking prevention program which trains middle school girls to run small substance use prevention groups with younger children (both girls and boys). According to the developers, the program draws on social influence and life skills models of prevention, using both adult leadership and peer reinforcement to resist social pressures that encourage substance use. The program consists of two phases: In the first phase, middle school girls are trained in a 14-hour long session with an adult leader on the short and long term effects of substance use, recognizing media and

peer pressure and skills for making responsible decisions. After completion of the training, the girls are certified as “PEERsuaders.” In the second phase, small teams of PEERsuaders plan and implement substance use prevention activities for youth aged 6-10. An outcomes study demonstrated a reduction in drinking among the middle school facilitators as compared to a delayed-start comparison group (Weiss & Nicholson, 1998).

Project Chrysalis

Project Chrysalis is a prevention, school-based program for girls with abuse histories and is designed to mitigate the negative effects of abuse, including substance use, suicidal ideation and risky sexual behavior. The program encompasses support groups, case management, skill-building workshops and information sessions. The support groups are typically run by school counselors and therapists trained in child-abuse issues and incorporates strategies to address negative thoughts, provide a safe environment to share feelings and raise awareness about the dangers of substance use. School counselors also met individually with youth to conduct a needs assessment and connect youth to needed community services. Participants also completed two one day trainings that focused on teamwork and personal commitment, as well self-defense and assertiveness. An experimental design study (Brown & Block, 2001) found that participation in Project Chrysalis was primarily associated with a change in attitudes (e.g., healthier beliefs and attitudes about substance use, fewer suicidal ideations and behaviors). The study also found that marijuana use initiation was reduced in youth who participated in case management and program sessions. Program attendance was also associated with less risky sexual practices immediately following the program but not in the two follow up periods.

Urban Women against Substance Abuse (UWASA)

UWASA is a school-based, prevention program focused on girls and their female caregivers. It is theoretically grounded in social learning theory (Berg, 2001). The program involves a self-development curriculum for adolescent girls which focuses on cultural and gender identity, risks of substance use, HIV awareness and career planning. In addition to the informational/support group for girls, the program involves a group for female caregivers (mothers), monthly mother-daughter sharing sessions, recreational activities and art projects. Additional support, e.g., home visits, are provided on an as-needed basis. A quasi-experimental study of the program found that UWASA had a positive effect on HIV knowledge, substance use attitudes, sexual self-efficacy (self perception on the ability to refrain from unwanted sexual activity) and improved mother-daughter communication. Long term outcomes on actual behaviors were not assessed.

Movimiento Ascendencia

Movimiento Ascendencia is a multi-faceted program that has as its centerpiece a mentoring component with other cultural, recreational, tutoring and case management activities. The program staff includes a program manager, coordinator and outreach workers in addition to the mentors connected with the girls. A quasi-experimental study (Williams, Curry & Cohen, 1999) found a reduction in delinquent activities among program participants as compared to a sample of girls identified through school and juvenile justice contacts.

Girls Circle

Girls Circle is a structured support group for girls from 9-18. It builds on relational theory and skills training with the intent of building positive relationships, strengths and competencies in girls. It was initially implemented as a prevention model in schools, community centers including boys and girl clubs, agencies, and clinics but is increasingly being implemented in juvenile justice settings in both probation and detention settings. The program includes a variety of manuals addressing diverse topics such as Healthy Relationships, Paths to the Future, Wise and Well, My Family My Self. Each manual includes an 8 to 12 week program. There are currently no guidelines for how manuals may differentially affect desired outcomes. A pre/post study of Girls Circle in Sonoma County (Ceres Policy Research, 2010) with probation-involved girls found a recidivism rate of 13% for study participants (no controls were included in the analysis), along with high satisfaction amongst girls and improved body image.

Effective Interventions with Justice-Involved Youth

The past two decades has witnessed a steadily growing and consistent emphasis on the use of evidence-based practices for medical and social services, including juvenile justice interventions. Evidence-based practice as defined by the American Psychological Association (2005) refers to the “integration of the best available research with clinical expertise in the context of patient characteristics, culture and preferences,” which closely matches the definition adopted by the Institute of Medicine (2001): “Evidence-based practice is the integration of best research evidence with clinical expertise and patient values.” These definitions particularly relate to the implementation of service and are a broader definition of EBP that encompasses both the research-based program and the service delivery model. Empirically Supported Treatment (EST) is a narrower category that refers specifically to programs that

have undergone rigorous research scrutiny, often through randomized trials, and have demonstrated efficacy in achieving targeted outcomes. These ESTs provide the basis for evidence-based practice.

Research-based services are particularly important in interventions for youth involved with the justice system as intervention can actually increase the risk of reoffending behaviors, despite good intentions from program developers and implementers (Gatti, Tremblay, Vitaro, 2009). Iatrogenic effects are theorized to occur through two primary and overlapping mechanisms as explained by labeling theory and peer contagion models. Labeling theory intersects with a focus on disproportionate minority contact (DMC) in describing how the judicial system, beginning with police arrests, operates selectively by over-arresting and giving harsher sentences to youth who are poor, minority and disadvantaged (Klein, 1986). Occasional delinquent behavior by these youth is then transformed into consistent delinquency by encouraging a self-perception that they are “delinquent,” reducing social opportunities and putting them in situations to mingle with other “delinquent” youth.

This latter consequence of labeling theory, mixing with other youth engaged in delinquent activity, is the focus of the peer contagion model. Peer contagion theory hypothesizes that grouping adolescents in treatment consolidates and reinforces antisocial behavior (Dodge, Dishion & Lansford, 2006). A review of published research on juvenile offender treatment (Lipsey, 2006) concluded through a meta-analytic technique that group treatment for justice-involved youth in community settings was 30% less effective than individual treatment. Gatti et al (2009) identified some moderators of peer contagion that either buffered or exacerbated the potential negative effects of group treatment. The youth’s individual level of self control and self-regulation minimized the effects of negative peer influence as did high parental supervision; whereas, peer contagion was heightened when a peer with high status in the group advocated delinquent activities. However, these moderators were only evaluated with a sample of male youth, so the applicability to girls is unknown.

Despite the distinct risk associated with group interventions for justice-involved youth, there are group interventions that have demonstrated significant positive effects. For example, Aggression Replacement Training (ART) is a group intervention focused on building conflict resolution skills and developing moral reasoning. When implemented with fidelity it can reduce additional justice contact by 7-25% (Aos, Phipps, Barnoski, & Lieb, 2001; Barnoski, 2004). However, when implemented without fidelity it increases the risk of recidivism by 6.9% (Barnoski, 2004).

Fidelity is a crucial element of ensuring programs can achieve desired outcomes. Unsurprisingly, outcomes from both health and juvenile justice implementation research demonstrate that so-called evidence-based practices do not outperform treatment as usual when there is no fidelity adherence to

the model (Henggeler, Melton, Brondino, Scherer et al., 1997; Barnoski, 2004). Mutisystemic Therapy (MST), for example, is an extensively studied and widely replicated program for juvenile offenders currently operating in North America, Europe and Australia. In order to maintain consistency in treatment across multiple sites, the MST program includes training, regular consultation and ongoing measures of therapist adherence through family surveys (Henggeler, 2011). Aggression Replacement Training (ART) in Washington State is monitored by a state quality assurance office which has developed a series of fidelity tools based on direct observation. The breadth of these tools illustrates the importance of assessing multiple domains of fidelity to ensure competent implementation. The fidelity measures assess competency in how well the group facilitators establish the appropriate group environment, use programs tools, offer appropriate feedback and accurately model skills (example in Appendix A). In cases where fidelity is seriously compromised to the point where the group environment is judged to be a risk to youth, the facilitator is counseled to stop the ART group (Chris Hayes, personal communication).

Washington State Girls Group Evaluation

Background

This evaluation grew out of a desire to better understand the effectiveness of girls support groups, specifically Girls Circle, for girls on probation in Washington State. Impetus for the project came through the Justice for Girls Coalition of Washington state, an eclectic group of state-level and juvenile court professionals, community advocates and researchers committed to the fair and informed treatment of girls in the juvenile justice system. In an effort to better understand current practices for girls, the coalition supported the application of this evaluation through the State's Advisory Group, known as the Washington State Partnership Council for Juvenile Justice (hereafter "the Partnership Council"). The Partnership Council is staffed by the Washington State Office of Juvenile Justice, in the Department of Social and Health Services. The Partnership Council and the Office of Juvenile Justice co-sponsored a training in Girls Circle for juvenile courts in 2004; consequently, they both had an interest in evaluating these groups for their effectiveness in reducing system contact.

We approached this study from both a process and outcomes perspective. As the outcomes evaluation was conducted with primarily administrative data, it was important to enhance the depth of this data by exploring the self-reported impact of the program from participating girls as well as perceived impacts from the group facilitators. Further, the study examined the general impact of girls

group as well as for Girls Circle specifically by including Girls Power!, a curriculum developed through the Benton-Franklin Counties Juvenile Justice Center. For clarity in interpretation and for outcomes, only programs delivered to girls on probation were examined. At the time of the evaluation, there was at least one known Girls Circle program operating in a detention center which was not included in the analysis.

Program Descriptions

Girls Circle

As briefly introduced above, Girls Circle is a group-based, girls only, structured support group designed to increase girls' sense of self-efficacy. The program contains a number of potential modules or activity guides that last from 8 to 12 weeks. These include activities organized around the themes of body image, being a girl, relationships, planning for the future, friends, mind/body/spirit and family. Groups typically occur once a week for two hours. They begin with a routine opening activity, an introduction to the topic, discussion and a hands-on activity. Activities in the modules include visual artistic expression, poetry writing, journaling, collages, and acting/role-playing.

Trainings on how to implement Girls Circle are available, including an initial training (2 day), an advanced training (2 day) and training on implementing the Mother-Daughter curriculum (1 day). Trainings are offered as a separate service from obtaining the manuals, which are available online for purchase. Also available is an evaluation toolkit that includes measures related to school attachment, self-harm, body image, tobacco/alcohol use, communication, physical health, sexual behavior and self-efficacy. Fidelity measures and ongoing consultation are not available (that can be ascertained from program materials. It is possible that some sites may receive ongoing consultation. The sites included in the present evaluation did not); although facilitators are encouraged to attend initial and advanced trainings to ensure fidelity to the model.

Girls Circle is currently the focus of a three year evaluation project being funded through the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention to look at the program's impact on girls' involvement in the juvenile justice system; it is not yet clear, however, whether it is being evaluated as a prevention or intervention program. It is currently rated by OJJDP as a promising program. A completed evaluation of Girls Circle as an intervention for girls on probation, including informal probation and girls who were diverted from probation, in Sonoma County, California was conducted from 2007-2010 (Irvine & Roa, 2010). Girls were mandated as a condition of probation or detention-alternative to attend an 8 week program; the module girls received was not specified in the report. Measures in the evaluation

included self-report surveys from the girl participants (n = 374) as well as some in-depth interviews. The participants were primarily white and Latina (47% and 30% respectively) and between 14-17 years old (88%). Results indicated that girls improved in body image and self-efficacy without reference to a comparison group. Among the participants, satisfaction with the Girls Circle program was high; although, in-depth interviews revealed that girls who felt misunderstood became frustrated with the program. In Sonoma County, the Girls Circle groups were run out of community-based counseling services and probation officers were inconsistently involved in the groups. When probation counselors were involved, the evaluators reported that girls felt less able to speak freely because a foundation of trust was not established for this scenario. Recidivism for the Girls Circle participants was 13%, although a comparison group was not included in the analyses.

Girl Power!

Girl Power is a structured support group developed through the Benton-Franklin Juvenile Justice Center for moderate and high risk girls. The goals of the program are to “promote healthy values, enhance personal relationships and increase social skills” as well as reduce recidivism (Girl Power manual). It includes 2 hour groups over a 10 week course, with a different theme for each week: creativity, mental and emotional well-being, spiritual self, body image and self-care, sexuality and safety, relationships with family and friends, communication and dealing with peer pressure, dating and self-determination, careers and goal setting and the graduation. The group structure includes journaling, sharing, psychoeducation, and an experiential exercise.

An evaluation of Girl Power was conducted for a master’s thesis (Schubmehl, 2010) which compared the Girl Power program with ART, FFT and probation as usual for a cohort of girls from 2003-2008 (n = 127). The evaluation found that girls who successfully completed Girl Power had lower recidivism rates when compared to probation as usual, but not completed ART or FFT. Whether girls on Girl Power also received another EBP, however, was not explored. Further, while the various treatment groups were found to be balanced as to level of risk (as identified by the Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment), direct controls for criminal history risk or other variables associated with recidivism were not included in the analyses. Consequently, this evaluation suggests that Girl Power is a promising program but needs further scrutiny.

Evaluation Hypotheses

The present evaluation had a number of research hypotheses as identified by the Justice for Girls Coalition:

1. Participation in a girls group will result in lower rates of recidivism
2. The program will be more effective for moderate and high risk than low risk girls.
3. Girls group participation will be related to successful completion of other court, evidence-based programs.
4. Girls group will act as an engagement tool and the success of girls group participation will be fully mediated by participation in another court-based treatment (ART, FFT, MST or FIT).
5. Girls groups are perceived as helpful and have high satisfaction among participants.

These hypotheses were addressed with a blend of qualitative and quantitative approaches to research as described below.

Method

Sample and Procedure

Data for the quantitative analyses were first requested from active girls group sites in Washington State. Three of five known active sites agreed to participate in the study and provide the names, court identifier numbers, and the dates of group participation for girls group participants (n = 195) from 2004 - 2010. Two of the sites also provided information regarding “successful” completion of girls group. Comparison data was obtained through the Washington State Administrative Office of the Courts, Center for Court Research (WSCCR). WSCCR is the repository of state level data related to juvenile and adult court data including 1) offense information, 2) the Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment and 3) program treatment database with information on referred and completed evidence-based practices (FFT, ART, MST and FIT). For the comparison group, data on all girls from the three participating counties with any court contact between 2004 thru 2010 were requested with the following exclusions because of the very low base rate in the treatment group:

- Any adjudicated sexual offense
- JRA commitment
- Younger sibling in jail
- Animal cruelty

Cases were then selected from this sample only if there was a prescreen on file (n = 2310). The full treatment and comparison sample was used a path analysis to test the mediation model hypothesis, but other analyses were run using a matched sample group taken from the larger comparison sample data.

Table 1: Demographics of Treatment and Matched Comparison Group

		Comparison Group		Girls Group	
		n = 171	%	n = 195	%
County	Benton Franklin	55	32.2%	63	32.3%
	King	32	18.7%	32	16.4%
	Pierce	84	49.1%	97	49.7%
	Other	0		3	1.5%
Race	White	89	52.0%	103	52.8%
	Black	42	24.6%	45	23.1%
	American Indian	7	4.1%	7	3.6%
	Asian	2	1.2%	6	3.1%
	Pacific Islander	3	1.8%	4	2.1%
	Latino	19	11.1%	22	11.3%
	Missing	9	5.3%	8	4.1%
Overall Risk Level	High	81	47.4%	98	50.3%
	Moderate	73	42.7%	77	39.5%
	Low	17	9.9%	20	10.3%
	Missing	0		0	
Accepts Responsibility	accepts respon	83	48.5%	78	40.0%
	minimizes	67	39.2%	94	48.2%
	accepts respon	17	9.9%	19	9.7%
	proud of antisocial	4	2.3%	4	2.1%
	Missing	0		0	
Current Alcohol Use	No	73	42.7%	78	40.0%
	Yes	77	45.0%	81	41.5%
	Missing	21	12.3%	36	18.5%
Current Drug Use	No	57	33.3%	58	29.7%
	Yes	93	54.4%	101	51.8%
	Missing	21	12.3%	36	18.5%
History Sexual Abuse	No	114	66.7%	129	66.2%
	Yes	57	33.3%	66	33.8%
		m	sd	m	sd
Age		15.82	1.42	15.66	1.29
Criminal History*		7.30	3.00	7.96	3.43 3.79, p = .052
Social History		7.68	3.25	7.84	3.08
History Running Away		1.91	1.55	1.91	1.58

*F = 3.79, p = .052

The matched sample was developed to provide a more intuitive way to present the data as it is easier to demonstrate with a matched sample that demographics and variables of interest are truly balanced between groups. The matching was performed with a propensity score. Propensity scores can be thought of as a numerical description of how closely each participant resembles the general characteristics of the treatment group (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). It is developed by performing a binary logistic regression with the treatment group as the dependent variables and variables of

interest (that the researcher is particularly interested in balancing between groups) as the independent variables. The probability scores from the regression are the propensity scores and are saved as a new variable. In this case, whether a girl participated in a girls group was the dependent variable and the independent variables included criminal history, social history (an aggregate score defined by the court risk assessment), age, mental health history, history of running away, history of sexual abuse, current drug use, current alcohol use, and whether the youth accepts responsibility for their actions.

The propensity scores were run with each county to ensure that county-level data was balanced. After developing the propensity score, an SPSS macro program (FUZZY) was used to specify the degree of matching within .05 of the exact propensity score. This value was selected to provide enough range to identify a sufficiently large sample for statistical power as well as keep the comparison sample as similar as possible to the treatment group (Austin, 2010). The resulting matched group (n = 172) was balanced on all demographics (illustrated below in Table 1) with the treatment group apart from a slightly lower and marginally significant difference in criminal history. Consequently, criminal history is included in all analyses that predict recidivism in this study.

Measures

Washington State Juvenile Court Risk Assessment Prescreen. The prescreen of the WSJCRA was used because the prescreen is completed for the majority of youth in formal contact with the juvenile court. Youth screening as moderate or high risk on the prescreen are given the full assessment; consequently, by using the prescreen and not the full assessment, low risk youth were included in the study as well. The prescreen includes domains related to family structure and climate, parent and sibling problems, school engagement and achievement, peer behaviors and attitudes, history and current use of substances, mental health history, housing history including out of home placement and running away, history of physical and sexual abuse, and history of violent and sexual offenses. Information from these items inform three aggregate scores: social history, criminal history and overall risk level. A study by the Washington State Institute of Public Policy found that the overall risk level was an acceptable predictor of recidivism risk level, as defined by criminal adjudications within 18 months of scoring. However, these analyses did not look at the predictive validity of the tool by gender. In the present study, we selected the following items and scales for their theoretical relationship to both recidivism risk and risky behaviors for girls.

Overall Risk Level. Risk level is determined by a scoring protocol from the overlap of both criminal history and social history aggregate scores. Youth are categorized into low, medium and high risk.

Criminal History Score. Criminal history score is constructed from a number of items related to age of first offense, types and frequencies of offenses, confinement, escapes and warrants. The maximum score is 31.

Social History Score. The social history score is constructed from dynamic items related to school functioning, family and peer variables, substance use and attitudes towards criminality. The maximum score is 18.

Does not Accept Responsibility. The accepts responsibility for antisocial behavior assessment item includes four levels: 1) Accepts responsibility for antisocial behavior, 2) minimized, denies, justifies, excuses behavior, 3) accepts antisocial behavior as okay, 4) proud of antisocial behavior.

Age. Age was calculated by subtracting the youth's birthdate from the date of the prescreen assessment included in the study.

Girls Group. This variable indicated whether girls had participated in one of the three studied girls groups (2 Girls Circle and 1 Girl Power) in the time frame. When the analyses consider the three groups separately, they are labeled as Group1, Group2, and Group 3. Group 1 is Girl Power; Group 2 and 3 are Girls Circle groups. The majority of analyses are run as "intent to treat" in accordance with accepted practice for program and treatment evaluations. Consequently, all youth who were referred and attended at least one group of Girls Group were included in the treatment group, regardless of dosage or status of completion. The relationship between successful completion and recidivism is examined in one of the analyses.

Recidivism. Criminal recidivism, in accordance with the Washington State Institute of Public Policy definition (ref), was defined as criminal adjudications(convictions). The follow up period began two months post program and ended 20 months post program for an 18 month total time period. Adjudications within two months of program were not counted because some youth had cases resolve for prior offenses during the program. For the comparison group, adjudications were counted two months post the first prescreen date through 20 months post the prescreen date, for a total of 18 months. The resulting frequency variable was used in the analyses as a log transformation to adjust for significant skew. As most of the analytic models used in the analysis assumed a normal distribution for variables, it was important to transform this variable. Consequently, reported mean scores for criminal recidivism (frequency) are reflective of the adjusted scale and not actual counts of recidivism. Adult

criminal activity was not followed. As there was no difference in the average age between the treatment and comparison group, youth who were aged 18 before the time period resolved were not removed from the analyses to preserve statistical power. By keeping these youth in the analysis, however, age is a statistically significant variable because youth under 18 have more opportunity to have offenses recorded in the juvenile database. Seriousness of offending was calculated by coding offenses on an 11 point scale; 1)misdemeanor misc. , 2) misdemeanor drug/alcohol and other; 3) misdemeanor property; 4) misdemeanor weapon/sex; 5) misdemeanor assault; 6) felony drug and other; 7) felony property; 8)felony weapon; 9) felony assault/violent property/kidnap; 10) felony sex; 11)homicide.

Analytic Approach

Relationships among group participation and recidivism (frequency and seriousness) were conducted with linear regression models. Items significantly correlated with recidivism were included in the analyses. To examine a possible interaction between girls group and risk level on recidivism as well as any differences between the three girls groups on outcomes, ANCOVA models were used with key controls included as covariates. Finally, to test the hypothesized effect of girls on group on recidivism as mediated by successful EBP completion, a path analysis using latent variable modeling with the full sample (including unmatched cases) was run which included the propensity score and other items related to criminal recidivism.

Results

Girls Group Participation and Recidivism

Variables included in the linear regression examining the effect of girls group on recidivism were entered in one step. The additional covariates included in the model were selected for their significant association with criminal recidivism. These included criminal history (beta = 0.21), age (beta = -0.13), and does not accept responsibility (beta = 0.15). These variables were all statistically significant predictors of recidivism in the regression model. Girls group did not reach statistical significant (beta = 0.10, $p = .054$).

Seriousness of recidivism was examined with a linear regression using the same covariates. Criminal history (beta = 0.14), age (beta = -0.14), and does not accept responsibility (beta = 0.18) were significant predictors of the seriousness of recidivism. Girls groups were not associated with seriousness. Table 2 illustrates the proportion of offenses within each category of seriousness for both groups. Girls participating in the girls groups were somewhat more likely to have misdemeanor alcohol/drug offenses

(e.g., possession) and property offenses (theft) but these differences did not reach statistical significance.

Table 2: Seriousness of offending

	Comparison n = 171		Girls Group n = 195	
	n	%	n	%
no criminal offenses	110	64.0%	106	54.4%
misdemeanor misc	2	1.2%	4	2.1%
mis drug/alc and other	9	5.2%	16	8.2%
mis property	15	8.7%	24	12.3%
mis weapon and sex	3	1.7%	3	1.5%
mis assault	14	8.1%	16	8.2%
felony drug and other	3	1.7%	3	1.5%
felony property	8	4.7%	15	7.7%
felony weapon	1	0.6%	1	0.5%
fel assault/viol prop/kidnap	7	4.1%	6	3.1%
sex	0	0.0%	1	0.5%

Girls Group Participation, Risk Level and Recidivism

To examine the interaction between criminal history level and girls group participation on outcomes, the criminal history variable was divided into three equal levels: 1 = 0-5 (28%); 2 = 6-8 (37%); 3 = 9-18 (35%). Criminal history was used rather than the prescreen risk levels because criminal history had a stronger association with recidivism than the prescreen risk score ($r = 0.17$ vs. $r = 0.14$). An ANCOVA analysis was used to compare the recidivism rates for the three risk levels and girls group participation. Age, $F(1,366) = 9.27$, $p < .01$ and does not accept responsibility were also included as covariates, $F(1, 366) = 6.78$, $p = .01$. There was no significant interaction between level of risk, $F(2, 366) = 1.35$, ns and girls group, $F(1,366) = 2.28$, ns.

Group Type and Recidivism

To examine a potential interaction between treatment site and outcomes, an ANCOVA model was run with criminal history, $F(1, 363) = 2.81$, $p < .001$; age, $F(1,363) = 6.91$, $p < .01$; and does not accept responsibility, $F(1,363) = 2.06$, $p < .01$, as covariates. Girls group, $F(1,363) = 0.96$, ns and treatment site, $F(2,363) = 0.72$, ns were both non significant. The interaction between group and treatment site was also non significant, i.e., there were not statistically significant different in outcomes among the three groups. However, group 2 displayed a trend towards lowered recidivism as compared to the other two sites.

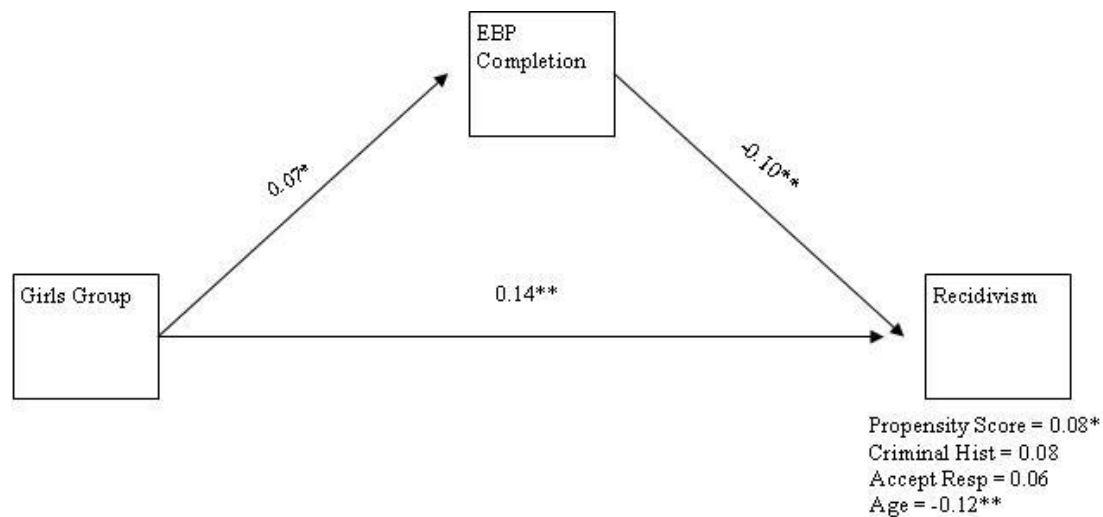
Treatment Success and Recidivism

To examine whether successful completion of a girls group was associated with recidivism, a linear regression was run to predict recidivism with criminal history (beta = -0.14), age (beta = -0.13), does not accept responsibility (beta = 0.06) and successful girls group completion (beta = -0.01). None of the covariates were statistically significant due to the lower sample size (completion data was only available for 106 of girls group participants). Successful girls group participation was also not related to recidivism; although, the trend did support a reduction in recidivism among successful completers.

EBP Completion as a Mediator of Girls Group and Recidivism

The main hypothesis of the study was that girls groups act as engagement tools to assist in the successful completion of other, evidence-based treatment such as ART, FFT, MST and FIT. To test this hypothesis, the full treatment and comparison sample (n = 2031) were used for the analysis with the propensity score included as a covariate to control for any self-selection bias in the two groups. A path analysis model was constructed with a direct path from girls group to recidivism and an indirect path from girls group to EBP completion to recidivism. A completely mediated effect would be observed if the direct path between girls group and recidivism was non significant and both the path to EBP completion and from EBP completion to recidivism were significant. Figure 1 illustrates the result of this model below. Fit statistics indicated the model fit was good and coefficients can be interpreted with confidence (Chi Square = 1.70, p = 0.79; CFI = 1.00, TLI = 1.14; RMSEA = 0.00). The path analysis demonstrated that girls groups do modestly contribute to the successful completion of EBPs and that EBPs are significantly associated with decreases in recidivism. However, girls groups also contribute an independent effect on an increase in recidivism that is due to other, non-estimated factors. Included as controls in the analysis were criminal history, propensity score, age and does not accept responsibility. Only the propensity score and age were significantly associated with recidivism in addition to girls group and EBP completion.

Figure 1: Path Analysis of EBP Completion as a Mediator of Girls Group and Recidivism



Process Evaluation

To complement the quantitative analyses, the current study also included interviews with group facilitators and two focus groups with girls currently involved with the two Girls Circle groups. The purpose of these data gathering activities was to understand the needs of justice-involved girls from the facilitator perspective, as well as the purpose and impetus for the groups. The focus groups with girls centered on the girls perceptions of the group, its benefits and how the group was affecting their behavior outside of the group. In addition to the three groups included in the quantitative analyses, the group facilitators for an additional girls group were interviewed for the process evaluation. The fourth girls group was a less structured group which involved a rotating set of Juvenile Probation Counselors who took turns facilitating weekly groups. The group was also provided to girls on probation.

Methods

The facilitator interviews lasted about one hour and were conducted in person. The interview involved a semi-structured set of questions concerning the impetus for the group (why did you think a girls group was needed?), the structure and logistics of the group (is it manualized, how are topics chosen, what is the structure), what topics girls want to discuss the most, what are the targeted outcomes/how are they tracked and what makes for a productive, successful group.

The focus groups were conducted with girls from groups 2 and 3. Between 6-8 girls were present in each focus group. The groups lasted about an hour and a half. The girls were asked questions about what they liked in the group, what they were learning, and how it applied to their “real” lives.

Interviews

Why was a girls group needed? In answering this question, facilitators focused on the benefits of girls-only groups as a gender-responsive improvement over practice-as-usual, as well as being able to address issues of more pressing or relevant concern to girls in this format. Regarding the former, one facilitator noted the general lack of attention to activities and services that focused on girls, “. . . activities did not recognize the relational needs of girls . . . playing basketball with other girls was not enough.” Another facilitator noted that girls were more likely to open up in girls-only groups, in contrast to other group format treatment offered through the court. Facilitators from the fourth group reported that they wanted to begin a group so that the girls could see the juvenile probation counselors in “a different light,” that went beyond an enforcer to someone who really cared about them and their well-being.

In addition to the perceived extrinsic benefits of a girls-only group, facilitators also noted that they wanted to provide a space for girls to discuss topics that had particular relevance to girls’ lives. The fourth girls group was formed specifically to address a number of common concerns that girls were presenting with across the JPC’s caseloads. Some of these included having mothers on drugs, living on the streets, running away, issues with boyfriends, not “liking” other girls. The other facilitators also specifically mentioned that they wanted to give space for girls to talk about their relationships, with boyfriends as well as other peers and family. One of the facilitators also noted that girls were more likely than boys to engage in self-harming behaviors, and the facilitator felt a group could help to ameliorate some of these behaviors.

Structure and Logistics. All of the groups described their groups as semi-structured and all had some kind of predictable/weekly rituals that included an opening activity/report out, a short psycho educational lecture, discussion and an activity. The groups varied in the degree to which they incorporated outside speakers as a regular feature of the groups. The Girls Circle groups did this the least often. The groups were also all quasi-closed, in that the groups tended to run through a session with the same girls and no new additions with very few exceptions. The group facilitators reported that building trust among the girls is very important, and not having new girls come in and out of the groups is key to establishing this trust.

What do the girls like to talk about? All the group facilitators reported that girls liked to talk about their relationships and about sex and dating in particular. There was some difference between groups in whether girls liked talking about drugs/alcohol and identifying strategies to resist use. One of the facilitators mentioned that girls liked talking about this, while another facilitator of a different group reported that girls tended to not want to discuss drugs/alcohol use or mental health issues.

What outcomes do you observe and how are they tracked? Interestingly, none of the group facilitators mentioned reduced recidivism as an outcome they were working towards. However, two of the group facilitators specifically mentioned that girls tend to benefit more from other court-based treatment (mainly ART or FFT) when also involved in a girls group. Most of the other responses focused on how the groups enhance personal strengths, including self-esteem, assertiveness, and being more emotionally open. One facilitator reported that a goal of treatment is to reduce violence and conflict in the girls' relationships, in home and with peers. Improved school performance was another goal mentioned by a few of the facilitators.

Outcomes beyond satisfaction were not being tracked in a consistent way among the groups. Most groups had girls fill out satisfaction/feedback forms at the end of group in which girls could provide information about what they liked or did not like about the groups.

What makes for a successful, productive group? All of the group facilitators mentioned that one of the most important elements of a productive group is a facilitator that is comfortable working with justice-involved girls, who is aware of how trauma impacts behavior and can de-escalate personal drama in the group. Having prior mental/behavioral health training and experience running groups was mentioned by two facilitators as a potential asset as a group facilitator. Group facilitators from the fourth group mentioned that girls on their caseload did not have much success with community providers because these agencies would not be comfortable taking on the issues and behaviors presented by the girls. Beyond this, group facilitators also mentioned that consistency in group attendance was important so the girls could build strong, trusting relationships. Finally, having a comfortable, welcoming environment with snacks was also noted.

Focus Groups

The focus groups with current girls group participants centered on what the girls liked about the group, what they had learned, how the group was benefitting them in other areas, and what they would like to see improve.

What do you like about the group? A common response that garnered a lot of consensus for this question was that the group provided a safe, welcoming environment where the girls could speak freely. As one girls reported “I like how we express ourselves. I like how you can just come in here and tell what you’re feeling.” Or from another girl, “It feels so beautiful in here right now. It’s a calming and very expressed feeling.” Girls talked about how they would walk in feeling mad and then walk out feeling happy. Another common response was regard for the group facilitator. As one girl reported, “You can tell that she cares and she doesn’t just do it because it’s her job.” An important aspect of the facilitator’s perceived role was respect for the girls, “. . .she’s very respectful when it comes to things. She gives you good feedback, positive feedback.”

How has this group helped you? The girls’ responses to this question focused on improved self-esteem/feelings as well as improved relationships with others. Regarding improved self-esteem, one girl reported that “It makes me feel better about myself. And if I feel better about myself, I’m gonna do better at school and do good.” Some other responses were more vague but reflected a general change, e.g. “It made me a different person.” The bulk of responses centered around improved relationships with other people, romantic interests and family members. One girl reported that, “I came here and I was having boyfriend problems, and then I got out.” Another elaborated on how the group led to a greater understanding of healthy relationships, “when you’re in love with somebody and you see that it’s an unhealthy relationship but then you come here and they tell you what an unhealthy relationship is, you’re like ‘oh, I can relate to that in my relationship . . . you have to let go even though you don’t want to.” Another girl described how the group led her to have greater empathy for her mother, “Like, if my mom is just stressed out and then I just put more stress on her I can look at it differently and be like ‘she’s too stressed out and I probably need to keep that to myself for a minute.’” Participants also discussed how they are more aware of anger triggers as a result of the group, as well as feeling inspired to “stop getting into trouble.” When asked how the group helped the girls stay out of trouble, the responses reflected an increase in motivation in stay out of trouble as well as giving the girls something to do and thus reducing opportunity to get into trouble. As one girl shared, “I could be somewhere for

fun at any time of the day. I don't have nothing to do. But I go and have a little fun and it helps you stay out of trouble."

Anything you would do to change the group? Girls did not have many suggestions for changes, instead girls in both groups re-emphasized how much they liked the group. In particular, girls re-emphasized how much they like the group facilitators.

Discussion

The present study examined the effectiveness of girls groups, broadly defined, in positively impacting reductions in recidivism for girls already involved in the juvenile justice system. The study found that the girls groups were overall not effective in reducing recidivism alone, but that there was modest support for the role of girls groups in assisting in the successful completion of court-based evidence-based practices. These EBPs, in turn, had a substantial impact on reduced recidivism. Consequently, girls groups can be recommended for juvenile courts as an engagement tool in encouraging the successful completion of other evidence-based practices with some cautions noted below.

Finding a lack of support or only modest support for the effectiveness of programs often raises as many questions as it answers. The current results may be a reflective of a number of known processes related to recidivism, including labeling theory and peer contagion as well as the unique relationship between girls and juvenile court. Additionally, the variables used as identified outcomes in the present study are very narrow and limited to known juvenile court contact. It is very possible that participating girls experienced substantial effects in other areas related to public health, including improved body image, self-efficacy and improved relationships. Results from the focus groups clearly revealed the importance of the groups in girls' lives as well as the positive impact of the groups in girls' self-perception and ability to make healthy choices in relationships.

The groups may have also had a temporary benefit on offending behavior not observed in the present analyses because of the manner in which we defined recidivism. Only adjudicated offenses occurring 2 months after initiation of the girls group and for 18 months after were counted. As one girl in a focus group mentioned, the girls group kept her out of trouble by providing her something to do. Consequently, girls groups may have had a mitigating effect on potential offenses during group that was not examined.

A greater awareness of the mental health and trauma needs among all youth, particularly girls, in the juvenile justice system has prompted a wave of interest in the identification and treatment of mental health disorders among justice-involved youth (see Skowrya & Coccozza, 2006). Efforts at the national level have focused on diverting youth with mental health challenges from system involvement through enhanced care or connecting youth with mental health services. However, it is becoming increasingly clear that mental health problems are not themselves, or at least not often, criminogenic. There is no evidence to suggest that providing mental health services alone will prevent future offending behaviors (Peterson, Skeem et al., 2009). Similarly, distorted cognitions around body image and self worth are critical public health concerns as risk factors for violent victimization, PTSD, and early mortality (Dixon & Graham-Kevan, 2011). However, there is no theoretical foundation for supposing that providing treatment for these risk factors would also, on their own, interrupt offending behaviors. Girls Circle, for example, was not originally developed to interrupt or even prevent offending behaviors among girls presenting with complex needs. Justice-involved girls are often dealing with more chaotic households, higher levels of violence and less financial and supportive resources than either justice-involved boys or non-justice involved girls (Fagan et al., 2007). Consequently, offending behaviors may be intimately tied into accepted routines for obtaining survival and wanted items as well as well as a way to preserve family and peer relationships. It is thus not surprising that Girls Circle may not have a direct relationship in preventing offending behavior as the curriculum focuses on needs and behaviors that are connected but not central to delinquency. Given the promise of girls group in impacting public health concerns, a promising model of treatment for these groups might include some collaboration with public health or mental health departments to fund these groups within the juvenile court setting.

Other evidence-based treatments for offending behavior are guided by psychosocial theories (e.g., social learning theory, moral reasoning, strain theory, family systems theory) that specifically focus on the drivers of criminal behavior. Integrating these theories and models of intervention into a girls group format, pairs girls group with another EBP or adapting existing EBPs to be more gender-specific, appears to be a more promising route to treatment than girls group alone. The hypothesis that girls groups act as an engagement tool for successful completion of EBPs supports Hubbard & Matthew's (2008) assertion that the best practice for girls may be interventions that combine both the relational and cognitive-behavioral approaches. Girls groups provide the relational and engagement approach that prepares a girl for working on problem-solving and anger-management skills in a group setting.

The role of girls groups as engagement tools is a useful finding in light of the recent attention to implementing strategies that increase the engagement of cultural subgroups into evidence-base

programming. Engagement has become a key issue as researchers and policymakers have focused on the dissemination of evidence-based practices. Both engagement and treatment retention suffer as treatments move from efficacy studies (well-controlled settings) to effectiveness studies (Morrison, Bradley & Westen, 2003). In one of the earliest papers to directly address the issue of modifying treatment for cultural relevancy, Rogler, Malgady, Costantino & Blumenthal (1987) pointed out that aligning services with the needs and cultural perspective of the client increases retention and is a key feature of culturally sensitive and effective interventions. The results of the present study suggest that providing services that are sensitive to the worldview and needs of a particular group, in this case girls, does in fact result in increased retention and successful completion of services. The focus groups with girls revealed that having a strong connection with the group facilitator, having a girls-only group, and being able to talk about issues of interest to them (e.g., relationships) were important and associated with high satisfaction. These lessons could be usefully applied to other group-based interventions for girls, e.g., girls-only ART groups that are adapted to reflect the kinds of social/moral reasoning applied by girls in situations that commonly lead to problematic behaviors.

Providing services within the juvenile court context is known to heighten the risk of reoffending through both self-labeling and peer contagion processes (Dodge, Dishion & Landsford, 2006). There is as yet no known research on whether a court-based group provides an additional risk for labeling over and above the actual court process; however, group-based work through the court does expose youth to the risk of peer contagion. Peer contagion has been primarily studied with male youth, in which low risk youth involved in a group intervention with higher risk youth increase their delinquent activities. Differences in social dynamics among girls, e.g., the greater protective effect of prosocial friends (Leve & Chamberlain, 2005), might suggest that girls would not be subject to these same risks. However, no research has specifically looked at the differential risk of peer contagion for girls vs. boys.

This study suggests that the risks of group treatment may indeed be salient for girls, as girls involved in girls group who did not successfully subsequently complete a separate evidence-based program had a higher rate of recidivism; although, the study was not comprehensive in its measurement of variables that could be related to both recidivism and willingness to engage in an EBP. Only a more rigorous study design (e.g., randomized control) could completely balance unmeasured factors between groups. In the meantime, the same cautions for group treatment likely apply for girls groups including 1) not including low risk youth in the treatment group; and 2) ensuring the program has strong fidelity monitoring and quality assurance protocols. Notably, group 2 in the present study referred

proportionally fewer low risk girls into the treatment groups and also demonstrated the only trend towards reduced recidivism among the three sites.

Additionally, fidelity to program protocols is a critical part of ensuring that programs achieve intended outcomes. Fidelity monitoring is also a useful diagnostic tool in examining the core elements of practice that differentially contribute to program goals. In the case of girls group, Girls Circle has outlined six principles that are essential to running a true “Girls Circle” but the program lacks a specific tool or framework for quality assurance monitoring. A fidelity monitoring system in Washington State could potentially build off of these six principles and integrate them into a checklist system such as the Aggression Replacement Training tools. Ideally, a quality assurance specialist would assess the fidelity of programs, but barring this, a checklist would at least act as a reminder and prompt for group facilitators in the critical environmental, social, modeling and peer interaction variables to monitor throughout the sessions.

Limitations

The present study is limited by the types of variables used to match and control for criminal recidivism. Propensity score matching, while a highly regarded and widely used tool for balancing non-randomized treatment groups, cannot control for unmeasured variables and groups may thus be unequal in unknown ways. Additionally, information on the successful completion of treatment was not available for group 1 and so the analysis looking at the impact of successful treatment on recidivism may be limited (the study found that it was not related). The study also only looked at girls group for girls on probation in the community and the results should not be generalized to the potential impact of girls groups in residential settings. Also, Girls Circle includes a number of possible manuals for conducting 8 weeks groups on various topics. This study did not examine the differential impact of various Girls Circle curriculum on outcomes. This area of research could be fruitful if one or more of the manuals addressed criminogenic needs in a more intentional manner. Finally, the results are limited to generalizations about adjudicated offenses from 2 months after group start and 18 months thereafter. This study did not examine the concurrent impact of girls groups on offending behavior or offending behavior beyond 20 months.

Conclusion

The results of this study suggest that psycho-educational and supportive girls groups increase the probability of successfully completing other evidence-based treatment for girls on probation. Without being paired with other EBPs, however, girls groups may pose a moderate risk for increased recidivism. We suggest the following recommendations for conducting girls groups in Washington State:

1. Provide support groups that do not address criminogenic needs only as engagement tools in conjunction or immediately prior to evidence-based treatment (e.g., ART, FIT, FFT, MST). Alternately, adapt or develop new programming that involves girls-only groups in a welcoming, gender-responsive setting that specifically addresses criminogenic needs (e.g., aggression, family conflict, meeting needs in prosocial ways). Adaptations or new programs should adhere to best practices strategies for fidelity and ongoing monitoring for effectiveness.
2. Refer girls scoring in the moderate or high range to groups provided through the juvenile justice system. Divert girls with high mental health need, scoring in the low risk range, to community services that address mental health needs and connect girls to supportive services.
3. For supportive, non-criminogenic girls groups that are provided through the juvenile justice system, develop and implement a fidelity and quality assurance monitoring tool (possibly based on the Aggression Replacement Training tools) and monitor fidelity through a state-level quality assurance specialist.
4. Given the impact of these groups on public health concerns, explore the possibility of cross-system collaborations for funding and implementing girls groups within the juvenile court.

Recommendations for group process

1. Provide a welcoming, safe environment by setting aside a special meeting place/room that is familiar and comfortable for the girls. Provide snacks.
2. Assist with transportation as necessary. Hold groups at times that are convenient for bus schedules.
3. Encourage consistency by developing a set of expectations regarding attendance with clear consequences for exceeding the number of allowable absences.
4. Ensure group facilitators have adequate training or experience in EBP topics and language as well as experience in running group sessions.
5. Use a structured format that includes a predictable, weekly routine and includes both psycho educational as well as expressive (creative) activities.

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Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview

Interviewee: _____

Date of Interview: _____

- I. Development
 - a. Who began the group?
 - b. When did it begin?
 - c. What observations of girls in the jj system drove the development of a girls-only group?
From your perspective, why is a girls-only group needed?

- II. Curriculum
 - a. Who developed the curriculum?
 - b. Is the curriculum manualized? What are the components?
 - c. Has the curriculum been revised since the original? In what ways?
 - d. What are the most common issues girls raise and want to discuss with the group?

- e. Would you characterize the group as primary educational (most of the group time is spent learning a skill), primary process-oriented (most of the group time is spent discussing relationships and interactions among group members), or primarily support-oriented (most of the group time is spent with group members discussing their

relationships or experiences that don't necessarily directly involve other group members)?

III. Structure

- a. How do group sessions begin each week?
- b. Are groups open or closed?
- c. Do youth graduate or can they continue to come indefinitely?

IV. Outcomes

- a. What are you hoping to see change in the girls you work with?
- b. Are outcomes for group members tracked in a consistent way? What are they and what have you found to change most drastically?
- c. What makes for a successful, productive group, on a week to week basis?

Yalom's Therapeutic Factors

I'm going to read a list of factors that may be involved in group work. Please rate how often these factors are present in your group: Never, Sometimes, Often or Every Session. Then, please rate the importance of these factors in encouraging successful outcomes for the girls in your groups. The rating scale goes from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (very important) or not applicable.

Appendix B: Focus Group Questions

- 1. What do you like best about the girls group? (“girls group” is a placeholder for whatever the group name may be in the specific location).**
- 2. Does the group feel welcoming and safe?**
- 3. How has the group changed your views about yourself?**
- 4. What have you learned in this group that has helped you in your life outside?**
- 5. How has the girls group changed your view of what you want to do in the future?**
- 6. Has the group changed your views on your relationships with boys, your family or other girlfriends?**
- 7. What is the biggest challenge you personally feel you have to overcome to achieve your goals in life?**
- 8. How has the girls group affected your participation in other court activities, like being compliant with probation conditions or participating in treatment?**
- 9. What changes to the girls group would improve the group?**

Appendix C: WS-ART Fidelity Survey

<u>Anger Control Training Session Adherence</u>				
Washington State ART Assessment © 2001				
Jurisdiction:	Date:	Instructor:	Co-Instructor:	
Week Number:				
		<i>Item Weight</i>	YES=1 NO=0	
<i>Please place a "1" in the box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> that best describes what happened in this session.</i>				
1. Was a positive climate established through welcoming students?		2		
2. Were any issues since the last anger control training session dealt with?		2		
3. Were group norms reviewed, emphasizing positive participation?		2		
4. Were all relevant ACT concepts covered to this point reviewed?		3		
5. Did most youth complete the hassle log(s)?		11		
6. Were the hassle logs used to review the anger control chain?		3		
7. Were efforts honestly and genuinely acknowledged?		2		
8. Were achievements rewarded?		2		
9. Were the hassle logs kept in the students' folders?		2		
10. Was the new ACT concept correctly introduced, defined, and briefly explained in understandable language?		11		
11. Was the Anger Control Chain correctly reviewed?		3		
12. Were visual aids used (poster of the Anger Control Chain or other visual aids)?		2		
13. Was the Anger Control Chain perfectly demonstrated by the trainer (as Main Actor) and co-trainer using a relevant adolescent situation?		11		
14. Did someone point to the Anger Control Chain concepts during the demonstration and practice sessions?		2		
15. Did each youth express how today's information could be personally useful?		2		
16. Did each youth correctly practice the Anger Control Chain as the main actor?		11		
17. Did each youth pick their own practice session partner?		2		
18. Did each youth provide performance feedback during the class?		2		
19. Was the order of performance feedback correct (co-actor, group members, co-trainer, trainer, main actor)?		2		
20. Were new hassle logs given to each youth as homework?		3		
21. Was behavior appropriately managed during the session?		3		
22. Did the session pace keep the students interested and active?		3		
23. Did the students appear to understand the ACT lesson?		3		
24. Does the primary instructor interact with the youth in a positive manner?		11		
25. Does the co-instructor interact with the youth in a positive manner?		3		
26. Does the co-instructor aid the trainer in delivering the intervention?		3		
Instructor Score			0	
Co-Instructor Score			0	
Comments				

<u>Social Skills Training Session Adherence</u>		
Washington State ART Assessment ©2001		
Jurisdiction:	Date:	Instructor:
Co-Instructor:		
Week Number:		
	<i>Item Weight</i>	YES=1 NO=0
<i>Please place a "1" in the box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> that best describes what happened in this session.</i>		
1. Was a positive climate established through welcoming students?	3	
2. Were any issues since the last social skills training session dealt with?	1	
3. Were group norms reviewed, emphasizing positive participation?	2	
4. Did most youth complete the Social Skills Homework Report?	11	
5. Were the Social Skills Homework Reports used to review last week's social skill?	3	
6. Were homework efforts appropriately and genuinely acknowledged?	3	
7. Were homework achievements rewarded?	3	
8. Were the Social Skills Homework Reports collected or kept in the students' folders?	3	
9. Were visual aids used (skill cards distributed and social skill title and steps displayed)?	3	
10. Was the new social skill correctly introduced, defined, and briefly explained in understandable language?	11	
11. Was the new social skill perfectly demonstrate by the trainer (as Main Actor) and co-trainer using a relevant situation?	11	
12. Did the someone point to the social skill steps during the demonstration and practice session?	2	
13. Did each youth express how the social skill could be personally useful?	3	
14. Did each youth correctly practice the social skill as the main actor?	11	
15. Did each youth pick their own practice session partner?	1	
16. Did each youth provide performance feedback?	3	
17. Skill steps read to the class by the assigned youth during performance feedback?	1	
18. Was the order of performance feedback correct (co-actor, group members, co-trainer, trainer, main actor)?	2	
19. Were new Social Skills Homework Reports given to each youth as homework and the top section filled out?	3	
20. Was behavior appropriately managed?	3	
21. Did the session pace keep the students interested and active?	3	
22. Did the students appear to understand the skill being taught in this session?	3	
23. Does the primary instructor interact with the youth in a positive manner ?	11	
24. Does the co-instructor interact with the youth in a positive manner?	3	
25. Does the co-instructor aid the instructor in delivering the curriculum?	3	
Instructor Score		0
Co-Instructor Score		0
Comments		

<u>Moral Reasoning Session Adherence</u>				
Washington State ART Assessment © 2001				
Jurisdiction:	Date:	Instructor:	Co-Instructor:	
Week Number:				
		Item	YES=1 NO=0	
		Weight	?	
<i>Please place a "1" in the box <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> that best describes what happened in this session.</i>				
1. Was the Problem Situation Chart made before the group?		3		
2. Did the instructor study the Problem Situation Chart for patterns of thinking and decide in what order to discuss the questions?		11		
3. Was a positive climate established through welcoming students?		3		
4. Were issues since the last moral reasoning session dealt with?		3		
5. Were Group Norms for the discussion session reviewed (page 111 in the book)?		3		
6. Were the four thinking errors reviewed?		3		
7. Was the Problem Situation read to the class?		3		
8. Was the real problem correctly defined and related to the lives of the group members?		11		
9. Was moral maturity established through:				
a) Eliciting mature responses first?		5		
b) Reconstructing less mature responses, and		5		
c) Listing them on an easel pad, chalk board, or white board?		5		
10. Was there an attempt made to make positive decision and mature reasons unanimous or a group decision?		2		
11. Were comments by each group member acknowledged?		3		
12. Were individuals within the group who evidenced more mature reasoning encouraged to explain their reasoning?		3		
13. Was the whole group praised for positive decisions and mature reasons?		3		
14. Were all group members involved in the discussion?		11		
15. Did the instructor encourage clear explanation of each person's answer?		3		
16. Was behavior appropriately managed during the session?		3		
17. Did the session pace keep the students interested and active?		3		
18. Did the instructor remain objective during the session?		3		
19. Does the primary instructor interact with the youth in a positive manner?		11		
20. Does the co-instructor interact with the youth in a positive manner?		3		
21. Does the co-instructor aid the trainer in delivering the intervention?		3		
Instructor Score			0	
Co-instructor Score			0	
Comments				